



**Wharton**  
Aresty Institute of Executive Education  
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

# CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER PROGRAM

*Transform your strategy. Elevate your influence.*



**Executive  
Education**

# THE WHARTON SCHOOL

## A pioneer in business education

The Wharton School has consistently pushed the boundaries of knowledge and cultivated leaders who know how to navigate the evolving global business landscape. Renowned for its unwavering commitment to academic rigor and practical relevance, Wharton's approach to management education is distinguished by its fusion of time-honored principles with forward-thinking perspectives, empowering business leaders to navigate the complexities of today's multifaceted business environment.

Wharton's influence extends beyond the classroom, shaping the discourse and setting the standard for executive learning worldwide. Its curriculum reflects the evolving needs of the business world, encompassing a broad array of topics essential for effective management in the modern age. From strategy creation and implementation to team leadership, people management, and understanding the global marketplace, Wharton instills a truly global perspective. This holistic approach, steeped in both theoretical understanding and practical application, prepares leaders to effectively manage people and processes, enhancing both individual and organizational effectiveness and productivity.



## ACCELERATE YOUR STRATEGIC IMPACT

In the dynamic and fast-paced world of business, the execution of strategy faces numerous challenges, ranging from insufficient resources and resistance to change to inadequate communication and a lack of alignment among stakeholders. Staying focused on the long-term strategy while tackling short-term pressures further intensifies these constraints. These complexities necessitate leaders who are resolute yet flexible and can persist in the face of setbacks while tactically responding to environmental shifts.

Strategy executives are driven by a desire to not just influence but also shape strategic directions, to be at the forefront of decision making, and to lead teams through the complexities of the modern business environment. In addition, they are required to sense market shifts, drive partnerships, and envision long-term plans. While exhibiting inherent leadership qualities, these executives often identify areas of growth in strategic foresight and personal branding. They also encounter the need for a deeper understanding of global business dynamics to prepare for top-tier leadership roles in larger, more complex organizations.

The 10-month\* *Chief Strategy Officer (CSO) Program* from Wharton Executive Education is designed for executives who aim to understand external environments, read early warning signals of disruption, and align the organization's strategy to gain a competitive advantage.

The CSO Program offers a unique opportunity for current and prospective strategy executives to catalyze their personal growth and step into global leadership roles. Leveraging the wisdom of Wharton's distinguished faculty, you will gain the confidence to tackle disruptive forces and evolve into an influential strategic architect who can navigate any challenge.

**81%**

of CSOs at top-quartile organizations adopt an active role in business ecosystems, exceeding their counterparts.

*Source: Deloitte CSO Survey*

**63%**

of C-suite executives are liberally allocating capital for innovative ideas and adopting more flexible approaches to tackle the speed of disruption.

*Source: EY New Global C-suite Survey*

# What you will learn

## The program will enable you to:

- Evaluate an organization's existing strategic initiatives and strengths in marketplace positioning to identify areas of improvement and potential competitive advantages
- Analyze an organization's readiness and preparedness to undergo transformative changes while evaluating the building blocks necessary to create a sustainable long-term strategic growth plan
- Apply proven approaches and models to facilitate successful expansion into foreign markets and industries
- Recognize, plan for, and incorporate disruptive trends in technology to drive competitive advantage and identify transformational opportunities within the organization
- Apply effective frameworks and key metrics to evaluate an organization's readiness to scale its operations, considering factors such as resources, infrastructure, and market demand
- Examine the essential leadership qualities and organizational considerations required to effectively orchestrate and execute strategic initiatives, fostering a culture of innovation and collaboration

— “



In the fiercely competitive and rapidly evolving business landscape, senior strategy executives grapple with the complex task of sustaining long-term success. These challenges are magnified by the need to align varied stakeholder interests, anticipate disruptive trends, and maintain a sharp focus on future strategic goals. Within this intricate landscape, the executive's own desire for leadership evolution, mastering complex strategic decisions, and contributing to global business dynamics emerges as a key driving force. The CSO Program is uniquely tailored to equip these executives with critical skills, paving the way for them to confidently and competently step into larger, global leadership roles.

” —

### Nicolaj Siggelkow

*Academic Director of the CSO Program; David M. Knott Professor; Professor of Management; Vice Dean, MBA Program; Co-Director, Mack Institute for Innovation Management, The Wharton School*

# Program highlights



## Live sessions

Experience live online sessions with faculty and cohort success coach and periodic guest lectures from industry leaders.



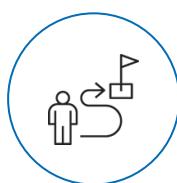
## World-renowned faculty

Glean insights from renowned faculty and industry experts who are at the cutting edge of innovation.



## Success coach

Craft your learning journey in line with your career goals with a success coach assigned to your cohort.



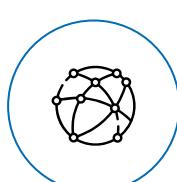
## Pathway to alumni status

Following the successful completion of the program and subsequent open-enrollment programs, subject to further qualification criteria and additional tuition, you have a pathway to apply for Wharton alumni status.



## Self-paced learning

Learn at your own pace with a weekly commitment of three to five hours of sessions and activities.



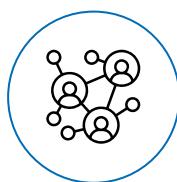
## Global peer group

Network with accomplished peers from around the globe and gain new approaches to leadership.



## Try-it activities

Learn from real-world case studies and try-it activities that will help elevate your strategic impact.



## On-campus networking

Meet peers from multiple cohorts, industry experts, and faculty during the optional two-day on-campus networking event.



## Capstone project

Synthesize the knowledge and insights gained throughout the program and apply them to an extended case study.

# Curriculum

The CSO Program is a flexible learning journey designed for existing and aspiring strategy leaders. You will learn through online and interactive sessions, fireside chats, and guest lectures led by Wharton faculty and global industry leaders. Through a blend of cutting-edge core modules and short courses, topical case studies, a capstone project, and try-it activities, the program will enable you to hone your strategy acumen and lead strategy in your organization.

## Core modules | 19 weeks

### ● Strategic Architect

Equip yourself with the tools and frameworks to assess the current strategic landscape, identify areas of strength and weakness, and strategically align resources to drive long-term goals. Through in-depth analysis and strategic thinking, you will gain the expertise to create innovative strategies, explore new avenues of growth, and implement strategic initiatives that create competitive advantage.

- Strategy Assessment—Part I
- Strategy Assessment—Part II
- Strategy Creation
- Strategy Implementation
- Evaluation of Global Strategies
- Foreign Market Entry

### ● Disruptive Growth Catalyst

Delve into the dynamics of disruption and leverage disruptive forces to drive growth and innovation. By understanding the transformational power of disruptive technologies and business models, you will explore strategies to navigate changing markets, seize new opportunities, and lead through successful transformations.

- Leading Innovation
- Connected Strategy and Value Proposition
- Connected Customer Experience and Customization
- Connected Producers, the Connected Strategy Matrix, and Revenue Models
- Technology Infrastructure and Disruptive Innovation
- From Products to Platforms
- Data as a Source of Competitive Advantage

### ● CSO as a Global Leader

Develop your leadership capabilities to thrive in a global business environment. Discover your leadership style, learn how to generate a compelling vision that inspires others, and master the art of effective communication. By understanding the science behind shaping culture, influencing stakeholders, and navigating complex organizational dynamics, you will enhance your ability to lead with impact.

- What Kind of Leader Are You?
- Generating a Compelling Vision: The Science Behind Creativity and Cascading
- Making Your Vision a Reality: The Science Behind Culture and Communication
- The Rider: Creating Change by Shaping the Way People Think
- The Elephant: Creating Change through Emotion
- The Path: Creating Change by Molding the Situation

# Curriculum

## Short courses | 7 weeks each

- Two required short courses will elevate your learning experience by enabling you to enhance your executive presence and influence as well as maximize your effectiveness in the boardroom.

- Executive Presence and Influence: Persuasive Leadership Development**

Gain the skill set needed to have an impactful executive presence through strategic persuasion and craft your unique leadership style.

- Corporate Governance: Maximize Your Effectiveness in the Boardroom**

Increase your impact on board-level decisions by gaining a deeper understanding of corporate governance and its role, structure, and responsibilities.

*Note: Short courses are subject to change.*

- Recognition ceremony and networking event (two days | on campus)**

Meet your cohort peers and faculty in person on the University of Pennsylvania campus in Philadelphia at an optional two-day recognition ceremony and networking event\*. This event enables you to network with not just your peers but also professionals from other cohorts to create a lifelong community of global executives. The networking event takes place once every four cohorts and is generally held within six months after completion of the program.

*\*A registration fee of US\$250 is applicable.*

## Live faculty-led online sessions

Strengthen your strategic leadership with live, application-focused sessions\* that help you navigate the accelerating impact of AI across enterprise models, customer ecosystems, regulatory landscapes, and organizational strategy.

- AI and Search: From SEO to LLMO, Kartik Hosanagar**

Led by Kartik Hosanagar, this session examines how commerce is shifting as AI systems and autonomous agents research, recommend, and purchase on behalf of consumers and enterprises. It introduces the move from search engine optimization (SEO) to AI engine optimization (AEO) and AI agent optimization (AAO) as well as its impact on brand strategy, data foundations, and go-to-market planning. You will learn how marketing, sales, and customer experience must adapt for a future in which AI guides most purchase journeys.

- Responsible AI: Ethics, Regulation, and Governance, Kevin Werbach**

Led by Kevin Werbach, this session explores how AI systems are becoming central to enterprise decision making and why leaders must ensure that their use is ethical, transparent, and aligned with emerging regulations. It outlines the foundations of responsible AI governance and how to design oversight, manage accountability, and support innovation responsibly. You will also examine global regulatory approaches to AI and understand the context required to lead adoption in complex, international environments.

*\*Note: Session topics and speakers are subject to change.*

# Capstone project

The capstone project presents an opportunity for you to synthesize the knowledge and insights gained throughout the program and apply them to an extended case study. Through a systematic and strategic approach, you will leverage the program's learnings to develop a comprehensive road map and framework. This hands-on experience can help you to translate theory into practice and drive change.



# Meet the faculty

Wharton's world-renowned faculty, along with acclaimed industry thought leaders, will prepare you to face a wide array of challenges. You will leverage their insights and domain expertise to better understand strategy and leadership and immediately implement the learnings.



## Nicolaj Siggelkow, PhD

*Academic Director for the CSO Program; David M. Knott Professor; Professor of Management; Vice Dean, MBA Program; Co-Director, Mack Institute for Innovation Management, The Wharton School*

Nicolaj Siggelkow is renowned for his influential research on the strategic and organizational implications of an organization's activity and resource choices. His work explores crucial questions related to organizations' evolution, growth, and adaptation; the impact of organizational design on performance; and the role of interactions among a firm's activities in creating and sustaining competitive advantage. He has led several open-enrollment and custom executive education programs on strategy for organizations including AXA, Citibank, Google, Hitachi, IBM, Merrill Lynch, Microsoft, Munich Re, PepsiCo, Progressive, and Sanofi-Aventis. In 2013, Siggelkow was elected as a fellow of the Strategic Management Society. Siggelkow is a member of the editorial review boards of *Organization Science*, *Strategic Management Journal*, and *Strategic Organization*.



## Andrew Carton, PhD

*Associate Professor of Management*



## Exequiel Hernandez, PhD

*Max and Bernice Garchik Family Presidential Associate Professor of Management*



## Raghuram Iyengar, PhD

*Miers-Busch, W'1885 Professor; Professor of Marketing;  
Faculty Director of Innovation, Experiential Learning and Research Initiatives, Analytics at Wharton*



## Rahul Kapoor, PhD

*David W. Hauck Professor; Professor of Management;  
Chairperson, Management Department*



## Christian Terwiesch, PhD

*Andrew M. Heller Professor; Department Chairperson and Professor of Operations, Information and Decisions;  
Co-Director, Mack Institute of Innovation Management, The Wharton School; Professor of Health Policy,  
Perelman School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania*



## Karl Ulrich, ScD

*CIBC Endowed Professor; Professor of Operations, Information and Decisions;  
Professor of Management; Advisor on Asia Strategy*

# Who is it for?

A photograph showing two men from the chest up. The man on the right is in sharp focus, smiling warmly at the camera. He has dark hair and is wearing a dark grey plaid blazer over a blue and white checkered shirt. A blue lanyard with the words "Wharton Executive EA" is around his neck. The man on the left is slightly out of focus, also smiling. He has light brown hair and is wearing a light-colored button-down shirt.

The *CSO Program* is ideal for executives involved in strategy development for their organizations or functions. This can include CSOs or VPs of strategy who are looking to deepen their skills as well as C-suite executives or heads of different functions who are interested in gaining skills to formulate agile strategies for their organizations.

## **The program is particularly beneficial for:**

- Experienced strategy executives, including aspiring, new, and existing CSOs, looking to sharpen their strategic and leadership skills
- Business-function heads determined to enhance their strategy and leadership capabilities to join the ranks of decision-making leadership
- C-suite officers in small to mid-sized organizations aiming to transition into the CSO role or integrate strategic planning into their decisions

## **Participants are required to have:**

- A minimum of 10 years of work experience
- Fluency in written and spoken English

# Certificate

Earn a Wharton Executive Education digital certificate upon successful completion of the program. Participants of the program get exclusive access to a wide range of professionals, events, and networking opportunities. Furthermore, you can also benefit from additional tuition assistance upon enrolling in further online electives from Wharton Executive Education.



Note: After successful completion of the program, your verified digital certificate will be emailed to you in the name you used when registering for the program. All certificate images are for illustrative purposes only and may be subject to change at the discretion of the Wharton School.

Please also note that participation in the CSO Program (a) will not result in a degree from, alumni status with, or earned credit at the University of Pennsylvania or the Wharton School (or, to Wharton's knowledge, any other institution); (b) will not be recorded on a University of Pennsylvania or Wharton transcript; and (c) does not guarantee or suggest that a participant will be admitted to the University of Pennsylvania, the Wharton School, or to any other university or institution.

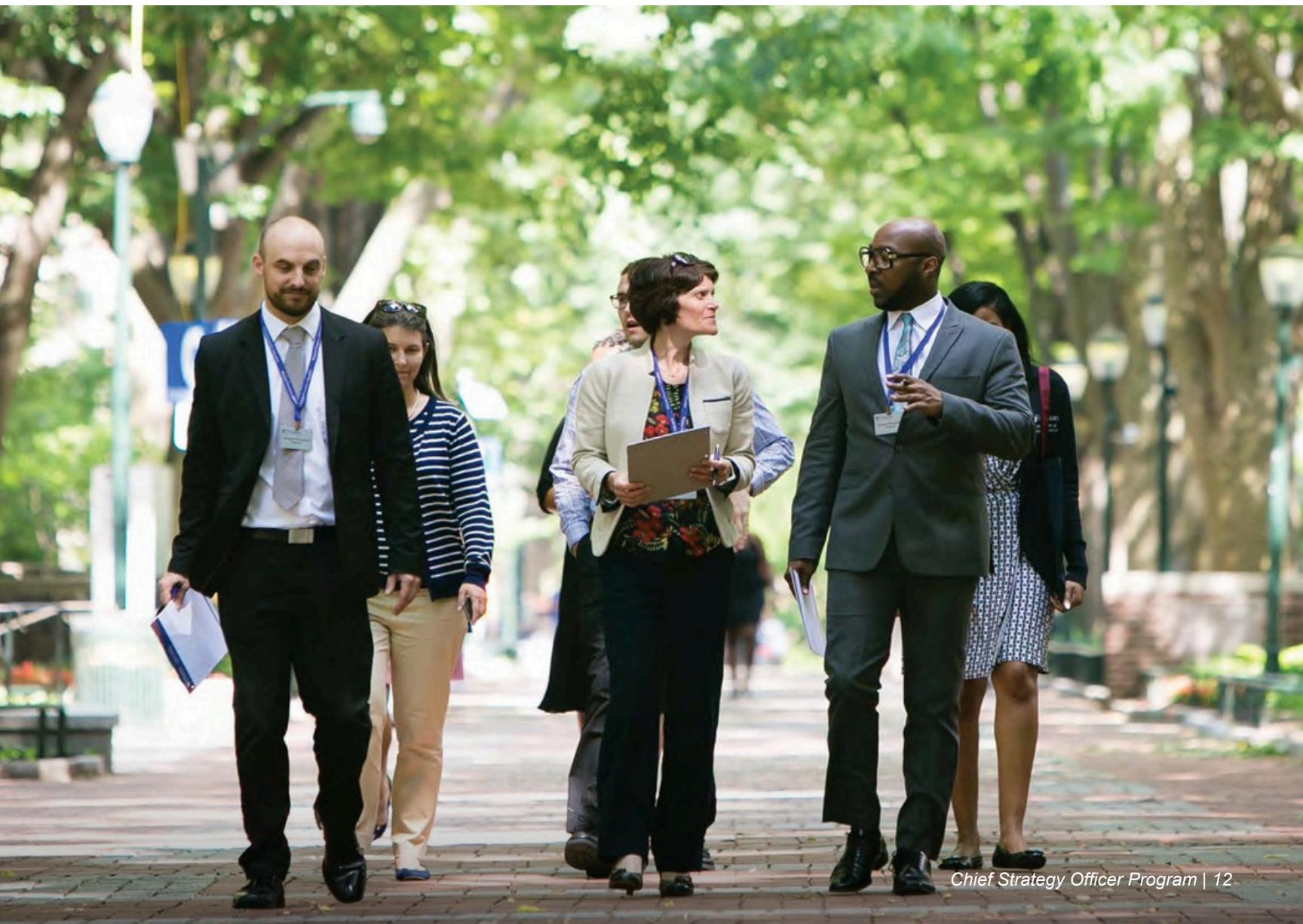
## PATHWAY TO WHARTON ALUMNI STATUS

For more than 135 years, Wharton has been the place where visionaries, inventors, and trailblazers get their start. After completing the *CSO Program* and subsequent open-enrollment programs, subject to further qualification criteria and additional tuition, you have a pathway to apply for Wharton alumni status.

Executives who successfully complete the *CSO Program* have the option of applying to the *General Management Program (GMP)*. The *GMP* provides further opportunity to enhance your leadership skills and business acumen with a flexible curriculum. The *CSO Program* provides one credit toward the six required to complete the *GMP* and earn alumni status. More details on the *GMP* are available at [Wharton Executive Education](#).

**Upon qualifying for Wharton alumni status, you will be eligible to receive:**

- Full access to become a member of 77+ Wharton alumni clubs
- Invitation to attend future Wharton global alumni forums
- A Wharton email address



# Application details

To apply to the program, please access and complete the [online application form](#).

Round	Deadline	Application fees
Round 1	January 15, 2026	US\$200
Round 2	January 29, 2026	US\$200
Round 3	February 12, 2026	US\$200
Round 4	February 26, 2026	US\$200
Round 5	March 12, 2026	US\$200

## Program fee: US\$22,200

Inclusions: teaching fees, all academic materials, and access to online coursework

Exclusions: A registration fee of US\$250 for the optional two-day on-campus networking and recognition ceremony, travel expenses (domestic, international, visa fee, and more), and other expenses not specifically mentioned in the fees

*Applications are evaluated on a rolling basis. We strongly recommend that interested participants apply early. The on-campus event of the program takes place in the United States. For those applicants who need a visa to travel to the United States, we recommend that you allow sufficient time for your visa processing formalities.*

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# Executive Education

Wharton Executive Education is collaborating with online education provider Emeritus to offer a portfolio of high-impact programs. These programs leverage Wharton Executive Education's thought leadership in management practice developed over years of research, teaching, and application.

**Schedule a call with an advisor to learn more.**

**You can apply to the program here**

**APPLY NOW**

**Email:** [wharton\\_cso@emeritus.org](mailto:wharton_cso@emeritus.org)

**Phone:** +971 80 0088601095 (U.A.E.)  
+44 1135 191350 (U.K.)  
+1 561 486 7448 (U.S.)  
+52 55970 90243 (LATAM)

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